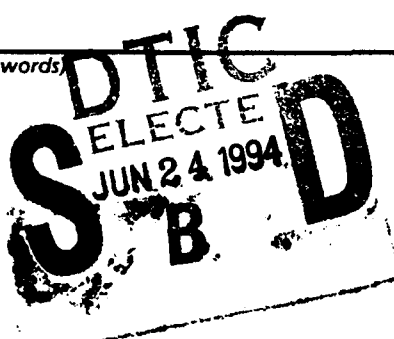



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**AIR WAR COLLEGE
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**JOINT FORCE AIR COMPONENT COMMANDER
OR
COORDINATOR?**

by

**Michael T. Probasco
Colonel, USAF**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENT
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA**

Advisor: Colonel Jim Roper

April 1994

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INTRODUCTION

The 20 August to 15 November campaign in the Pacific was overwhelmingly an air campaign. It all centered around a single airfield, a few hundred men and the few dozen planes that flew from there. The enemy lost thousands of men trying to recapture it. The Marines, Navy, and Air Force fliers (always outnumbered but never out fought) beat back four successively more powerful attempts to seize their vital airfield. When air power of a truly joint force decisively turned back the final assault on Guadalcanal, the Japanese empire was doomed. (21:207)

This air campaign in 1942 showed what joint employment of air power should and must be. The men of the Cactus Air Force defending Henderson Field on Guadalcanal fought a common enemy for a single strategic end – survival. They set aside service rivalry, adapted their service doctrine, employed a single air component "commander", and overcame overwhelming odds to beat the Japanese. In spite of this success of a single air commander necessitated by circumstances, the services have since those 87 days in the summer/fall of 1942 let service rivalries, competition for budget dollars and "rice-bowl" doctrines that tend to protect service turf, all interfere with development of a common sense joint doctrine for the employment of air power. Even with Goldwater-Nichols, the services cling to professed joint doctrines that ignore the realities of a declining force structure and budget, by simply reducing their piece of the air power pie. A micro-example of this "salami-slice" approach is the 12 Navy carrier force, one of which must now be permanently manned by Marine aviation because of cuts in the Naval air force. A more macro-level example is how each service proposes its uses of air power in the future. We still see Naval carrier battle groups, Marine Air Ground Task Forces, self-contained composite USAF air wings and the continuing question of close-

air support for the U.S. Army. This author found very little evidence that suggested an fresh inter-service (joint) reexamination of the paradigm of the joint use of air power in support of the Joint Force Commander's (JFC) campaign plan.

Even with the recent successes of air power in DESERT STORM, we still have a controversy whether the employment of air power needs a single joint force air component commander (JFACC) or coordinator. In spite of claims to the contrary, the JFACC in DESERT STORM, General Horner, was not the joint force air component "commander" in the strict sense of the word. He and his staff coordinated the employment of joint and coalition air forces, and commanded the U.S. Air Force component.¹ The overwhelming numerical superiority of coalition of air power in DESERT STORM allowed accommodation to prevent interservice conflict. Future force structure of the U.S. may not allow accommodation, but instead demand the efficient allocation of air power in support of the JFC campaign plan, possibly to the detriment of single service priorities and plans.

This paper will first examine the authority and responsibilities of the JFACC required to employ air power in a given theater of operations. For a starting point, this will be a generic theater, where no single service's contributions to air power have an advantage over another service's contributions. Then, it will analyze differences between a joint force air component "coordinator" (as advocated by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps) and a joint force air component "commander" (as advocated by the U.S. Air Force and accepted by the U.S. Army if it does not adversely impact their air operations, fire support coordination line, or theater air defense) in the direction of air power. This

¹According to the Gulf War Air Power Survey, General Schwarzkopf gave General Horner authority to control most Coalition air power. Horner used that authority with sufficient discretion to get his job done while maintaining good relations with the other Services and the allies. Indeed, some would argue after the war that his contribution had been to coordinate rather than to command or control.

analysis will lay the foundation for a common sense answer to the question -- should the JFACC be a "coordinator" or a "commander"?

JFACC AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication O-2, the Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), establishes principles and doctrine that govern the activities of the armed forces when two or more services are acting together. (13:2) This publication states that when military forces are acting as a team during any military contingency, they do so under a single commander--the Joint Force Commander. The JFC has operational command of service-assigned forces and exercises command through his component commanders. His component commanders are notionally his land component (army/marine), naval component, air component (JFACC), and special operations component, all acting as an integrated and joint team executing his joint campaign plan..

All Joint Publications state that JFACC authority and responsibilities are derived from the desires and direction of the JFC. Joint Pub 3-01.2, "Joint Doctrine for Theater Counterair Operations," provides the following guidance on JFACC responsibilities:

"a. The JFACC's responsibilities will be assigned by the JFC (normally these include, but no be limited to, planning, coordination, allocation, and tasking based on the JFC's apportionment decision).

"b. Based on the JFC's guidance and in coordination with the other component and supporting commanders, the JFACC will recommend to the JFC apportionment of air forces to various mission or geographic areas."

More specifically, Joint Pub 3-56.24, "Tactical Command and Control Planning Guidance and Procedures for Joint Operations--Joint Interface Operational Procedures--Message Text Formats," describes the role of the JFACC in deciding the percentage or priority of mission types (apportionment), coordinating service requirements with joint support/cross-force tasking (allocation), and allotting sorties based on joint force requirements (allotment). Additionally, the JFC may also designate the JFACC to act as the Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) and Airspace Control Authority (ACA).²

In order to put the JFACC authority and responsibilities in context, we must address the planning and execution cycle of the employment of air power. The accepted terminology for the JFC's instrument for unity of effort is the Air Tasking Order (ATO). The ATO specifies how all available joint air power will be employed during a given time period or cycle (normally 24 hours) to support JFC's priorities and objectives. The term ATO "cycle" is used because the JFACC must consider all aspects of air power (including air defense) employment prior to issuing the order. He must answer the what, how, where, when, and with which element of air power questions that effectively uses and integrates all available air power. The ATO must arrive at tasked units in time for those units to allow individual/package mission planning, coordination between geographically separated units, up-loading of specified ordinance (or get permission for alternate ordinance, if the specified ordinance is not available), and allow pre-mission crew briefings prior to mission execution. The outline of this ATO cycle is as follows:

1. What can air power do to best support the JFC's objectives and priorities? (planning/intelligence/targeting)
2. What air power is available during the period covered by the ATO? (coordination/allocation/weaponeering)

² General Schwarzkopf designated General Horner as JFACC, AADC, ACA, and Coordinating Authority for Interdiction during DESERT STORM.(11:6)

3. What is the most efficient and effective use all available air power to satisfy the JFC's objectives and what are the special needs of ground, naval and air components during the next given time period?
(allotment/develop an ATO shell)
4. How do U.S./Coalition forces defend against enemy air attack and how is that defense integrated into the overall plan? (air/missile defense)
5. De-conflict the ATO with other forces that use the air. (airspace deconfliction).
6. Publish and insure distribution of the ATO to all tasked units.
7. Execute the ATO, monitor mission success/failure and redirect sorties as required by short notice changes in the conflict environment.
8. Assess the success of ATO execution (battle damage assessment) and update target, enemy Air Order of Battle (AOB), and friendly AOB data bases.
9. Proceed to step 1.

This process works best when effective electronic communications, excellent intelligence and compatible command relationships exist. During Operation DESERT STORM shortcomings in each of these areas detrimentally affected the ATO process. According to General Buster C. Glosson, the success of the air campaign depended on synchronization of theater air assets by a single ATO. However, the Navy and Marine Corps were unfamiliar with the Air Force ATO process. NAVCENT lacked compatible software and equipment which required hand-delivery of the ATO to Navy forces afloat. (12:vi-x) This shortfall in communications limited JFACC flexible use of the naval air arm (approximately 170 aircraft). Once a course of action was charted in the ATO, the JFACC could not redirect naval air assets. Secretary of Defense Cheney stated:

After the Master Attack Plan was written, planners rarely changed Navy sorties because of planning and communications concerns. Initially, this limited the flexible use of Navy air assets and resulted in USAF and USMC land-based air assigned to the most short-notice changes.
(4:161)

Similar shortcomings in intelligence (especially as related to Battle Damage Assessment) and command relationships (distrust of the JFACC by the Marine Corps leadership) all undermined the effectiveness of the ATO cycle during DESERT STORM³. Whether solutions to these shortcomings continue to receive top priority during the downsizing of the Department of Defense will only be finally decided by history. However, in all probability, the DOD will never reach perfection in the ATO cycle. Consequently, the JFACC must have clearly recognized authorities over the air component contribution to the theater campaign plan, in order to overcome shortcomings in the process and the natural fog of war.

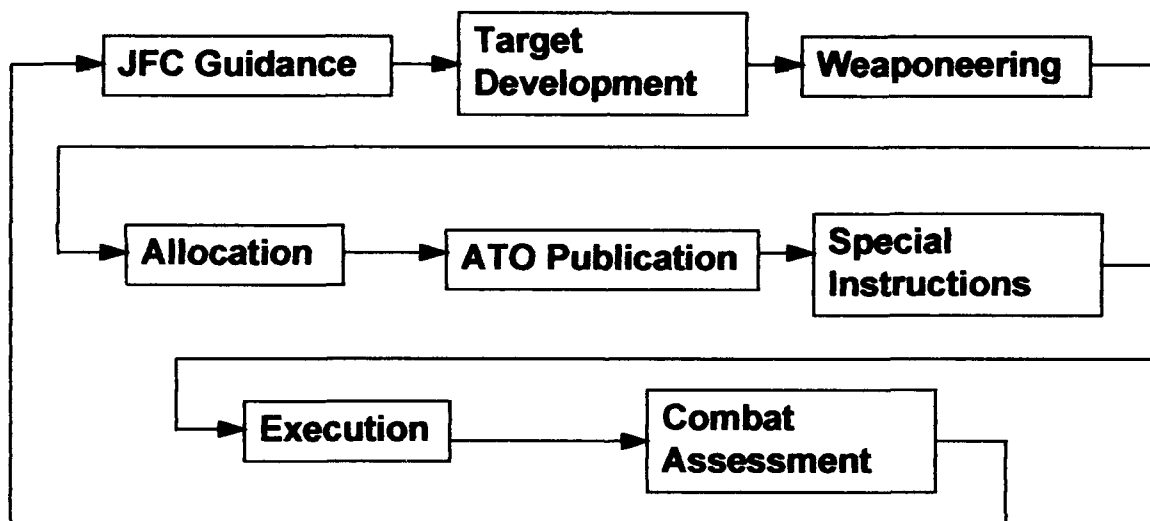


Figure 1 - ATO PROCESS

³ During the five weeks prior to ground operations, the JFACC believed that the Marine use of their withheld F/A-18s and AV-8s went beyond preparing the battlefield for Marine ground operations. Marine commanders agreed, but they feared that their air assets would be diverted for something the JFACC felt was more important once preparations for ground operations commenced. This distrust caused an inefficient use of Marine air supported by the fact that the Marine air flew 9% of all sorties flown from 17 January to 3 March 1991, yet flew 12% of all sorties flown during the five-day period of the ground war when all coalition air forces were flying at an increased operational tempo. (26:120-121)

The ATO cycle (Fig 1) implies a certain time period for completion. In the USCINCPAC/USCINCLANT policy for the employment of a JFACC, it states that the typical ATO cycle starts 36 to 48 hours prior to execution day, so the total cycle time could be up to 72 hours including execution day. (26:9) This reflects the experience in Desert Storm, where it took 48 hours to just generate an ATO for a 24 hour execution day. (27:110) During exercise TANDEM THRUST 92, this cycle started just 11 hours prior to execution day (total cycle time of 35 hours) and worked well for the numbers of participating forces involved. In any scenario, a short total ATO cycle time will enhance the responsiveness of air power to changing situations.

Each of the steps in the ATO cycle demand JFACC certain authorities and responsibilities. Whether selecting targets or redirection of currently airborne assets, JFACC authorities must be clearly defined and understood by all components. Each phase of ATO development has certain common and unique demands. What are the demands of these phases? It starts at the beginning of the process.⁴

PLANNING/INTELLIGENCE/TARGETING

The JFC must set quantifiable military objectives (strategic intent) and a clear definition of success that serve as the foundation of an ATO cycle. (16:IV-3) JFC objectives identify targeting priorities, planning guidance, rules of engagement, and other operational constraints and direction. Prior to any decision, each component commander (including the JFACC) must nominate target priorities that support component execution of the campaign plan and make apportionment recommendations

⁴One should note that this discussion ignores how the forces got here, the JFACC's roles and responsibilities in development of the overall campaign plan, what service the JFACC represents, and the dynamics in the execution of any campaign plan.

to the JFC.⁵ The JFACC also proposes objectives and guidance for all joint air operations (including a collateral air campaign plan) that support the JFC's strategic intent. (16:IV-4) The JFC then issues his guidance and apportionment decision. In addition, typically the JFC establishes a Joint Targeting Control Board (JTCB) that prioritizes component target category nominations and that develops a prioritized target category list called a Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List (JIPTL)

The issue of the JFC approved JIPTL given to the JFACC shows some differences in service interpretation. In the USCINPAC/USCINLANT agreement of January, 1993, the Joint Targeting Control Board (JTCB - comprised of key JFC staff members and a senior representative from each war fighting component) maintains a macro-level view of the battlefield and balances conflicting component priorities with the JFC's guidance and intent. (2:4) It further states that the JTCB will prioritize component target category nominations and develop the JIPTL. The draft U.S. Navy publication "Joint Force Air Component Commander Organization and Processes" (NWP 3-56.1-TEST dated 23 Feb 94), states that the JTCB may "prioritize target categories (not individual targets within the categories)." (25:B-1) The JFACC Primer states that the JTCB helps the JFC to coordinate targeting information, to provide targeting guidance and priorities, and prepare and refine joint target lists (JTL). It further states that "if the JTCB itself establishes target sets, targets, or priorities, ... it interferes with the JFACC's ability to plan and conduct theater air operations..and..may be unsuitable for adapting and reacting to enemy initiatives." (10:22-23) This is the first area where interservice conflict over JFACC authority begins to evidence itself; the authority to act as an air

⁵During the development of a theater campaign plan, the JFC staff, with direct component inputs, develop a Joint Targeting List (JTL). This list (database) starts with inputs from Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the theater Joint Intelligence Centers (JICs) based on integrated order of battle data. The JTL (approved by the JFC) serves as a baseline target list that assists component selection of specific targets that fall within the criteria of stated JFC objectives and priorities. After ATO execution, combat assessments will change the JTL database. (16:IV-1-2)

component "commander" answerable to the JFC in developing a detailed JTL or JIPTL, or the limited authority as the "coordinator," whose actions must be approved by the JFC prior to implementation. This paper will explore this conflict later.

COORDINATION/ALLOCATION/WEAPONNEERING

This phase of the process integrates forces available with JFC guidance. The JFACC makes an initial plan that incorporates JFC guidance/apportionment, joint sorties/weapons available, component air support requests and the JTL/JIPTL. Outputs of this process are the allocation of total sorties by type aircraft/mission, allotment of missions from one air capable commander to direct support of another, and an ATO shell. After the JFACC approves these outputs, they are forwarded to all affected components/units and the development of the final ATO begins. (26:7)

AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE

The JFACC may, at the direction of the JFC, also serve as the Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) who is responsible for theater air defense (15:2). The AADC directs and enforces appropriate aircraft identification tactics, techniques, and procedures. (26:7) AADC must provide instructions in sufficient detail to plan and execute all missions in the ATO. (16:IV-7) These instructions are integrated with the airspace deconfliction plan and become part of the ATO.⁶

⁶According to the August 1992 JFACC Primer the U.S. Army believes that control of missile defense is separate from air defense of aircraft and AADC control. According to that view, the AADC only provides attack warning not fire control. It concludes that, "Unity of effort for air and missile defense must be under a single responsible commander capable of prioritizing all assets across the theater of operations in support of the JFC's campaign. The JFACC/AADC is the correct level to synchronize the vertical dimension of the battlefield and the existing TACS (Tactical Air Control System) architecture for missile defense should be utilized vice inventing a new one." (10:25-26) The February 1994 version more

AIRSPACE DECONFLICTION

Normally the JFACC acts as the Airspace Control Authority (ACA). In responding to the needs of the JFC, the responsibilities of the ACA include coordinating and integrating the use of the airspace control area. The ACA also provides for the integration of an existing airspace control system within a host nation. These efforts result in an Airspace Control Plan that is implemented daily through an Airspace Control Order (ACO).

The multiplicity of "users of the air", whether component helicopter operations, long range artillery/rocket fire beyond the Army's Fire Support Coordination Line (FSCL), coordination of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTAF) Amphibious Operations Area (AOA), fleet air operations, or ground based air defense forces, all demand that a deconfliction order (ACO) define how all participants will use the air medium. Since all components use the air in some way, deconflicting airspace can present challenges. Sometimes the ACA can make accommodations. In the Gulf War, with superiority in air power, helicopters flying less than 500 feet above the ground and naval aircraft on over water flights were exempted from direct JFACC/ACA control. (18:5-6) The question remains, what authorities does the JFACC/ACA need in a generic conflict? Should those command decisions regarding the use of the air medium require approval by the JFC in each case, or should the JFACC/ACA have inherent decision making capability as commander of the joint air component?

bluntly states that "theater air and missile defense operations fall within established AF roles and missions; missile defense is part of counterair." (11:34)

ATO / SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS (SPINS) PUBLICATION

The ATO incorporates all AADC and ACA guidance into a final mission plan. Components recommend last minute changes to target requests and asset availability, and the JFACC develops a final ATO. ATO completion and success depends upon joint planners and liaison officers with command authorities from each component. During the final stages of ATO development, planners frequently need immediate answers to questions that can not wait for full coordination back through each component commander, as demonstrated in Tandem Thrust 1992.⁷ In any case, all commanders must understand that the JFACC's decisions regarding the allocation of air power are based on reason, not on service or component parochialism.

JFACC AS A COORDINATOR

Both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps clearly state their position regarding the roles and responsibilities of the JFACC in the employment of air power; the last "C" in JFACC means "coordinator." In the case of the USMC, this belief rests on the combat integrity of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) which includes AV-8B Harriers and F/A-18C/D fighters. Since the "ground" part of the task force possesses inadequate heavy firepower, air power serves an airborne artillery function. This view is expressed in "USMC Concepts and Issues-93" with the following quotation: "the firepower contribution of tactical aviation is a significant part of the otherwise lightly armed 'combat system' we call the MAGTF." (9:25) As stated in the USMC FMFM 1, "subordinate commanders must make decisions on their own initiative, based on their understanding

⁷The author was privileged to listen to deliberations among the JFACC component representatives. The mutual understanding and trust among all participants led to an extremely successful exercise.

of their senior's intent, rather than passing information up the chain of command and waiting for the decision to be passed down." (6:62) Not unlike the U.S. Army in North Africa in WWII, the U.S. Marines consider air power as an integral part of the ground battle, and without air power the MAGTF cannot operate as an integrated team. Given the task allocated to them by the JFC, the USMC does not want to rely on the JFACC to allocate their own air arm sorties back to them.

The problem lies in the fact that the MAGTF now depends on its organic aviation to provide organic firepower (airborne artillery), replacing heavy artillery that a comparable U.S. Army division possesses. (23:66) Consequently, the starting USMC position, as articulated in the "Omnibus Agreement of 1986" (SM-142-86), must place all organic Marine aviation assets under the direct command and control of the MAGTF commander. Any sorties excess to MAGTF direct support operations may be allocated to the JFC for tasking. To reemphasize, the "Marine Corps considers organic MAGTF aviation a supporting arm immediately responsive to needs of GCE (Ground Combat Element) commander" and any excess may be tasked for other purposes.⁸ (5:1)

An analysis of the USMC position raises certain questions. One must view the starting point in any discussion that the USMC views the MAGTF as an integrated combat team

⁸An interesting quotation from the "Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC)/Omnibus Agreement Notes" helps frame the USMC position. "Key points in understanding JFACC:

- JFACC does not command other Service forces as name implies.
- Designation carries no inherent authority to exercise OPCON.
- Implicit in OPCON is possession of assets; Omnibus Agreement affirms that MAGTF commander has OPCON of MAGTF air assets.
- JFACC coordinates employment of air capability; air capability is provided as sorties, not assets
- Authority to task assets as opposed to sorties is de facto OPCON.
- Omnibus Agreement provides authority for JFACC to task sorties as a means to coordinate employment of MAGTF air capability.
- Availability for tasking of MAGTF sorties per Omnibus Agreement obviates need for JFACC to task MAGTF assets.
- MAGTF integrates functions (force, planning, effort, operations, sorties) but not 'things' (forces, units, aircraft, assets) for joint operations." (5:2-3)

and that any subtraction from that team risks the lives and assets of that team. The premise that the MAGTF commander knows what's best for his airborne artillery has validity; after all, the JFC assigned the Marines to accomplish some objective in support of his campaign plan. Does this mean that the MAGTF commander knows at least as much, and perhaps more, about the overall battlefield situation than the Joint Force Commander? This assumes that once ashore, the USMC becomes part of the overall land campaign and consequently has less justification to require unique treatment as a ground component as that required when conducting forcible amphibious operations.

An even more basic approach compares the concept of organic air power during the North African campaign in World War II. The misuse, or to put it mildly, the inefficient use of air power served as the basis for a separate U.S. Air Force in 1947. What is particularly unique about Marine force operations ashore as compared to the USAF/Army integrated air-land battle team? The first answer given in conversations with U.S. Marines is that they do not possess the organic heavy firepower that the U.S. Army possesses and consequently they need air power to replace that deficiency. This is obviously true with amphibious operations where the MAFTF establishes an AOA and controls the battle space. Once the operation is completed and the USMC becomes part of the air-land battle team, the question of independent USMC air power quickly begins to reach the level required by the U.S. Army using joint air power to replace a lack of heavy firepower.

The recognition of a situation of "excess" sorties raises a further issue. Clausewitz's principle of economy of force would suggest that "excess sorties" should be an exception rather than the rule. From the standpoint of defense budget justification, it could be detrimental to formally recognize that excess air sorties could exist (except in a rare circumstance) in a declining force structure.

The U.S. Navy position tends to support that articulated by the USMC. "Based on the JFC guidance and intentions, the JFACC will recommend apportionment of joint air sorties to the JFC. Apportionment will take into account all component commanders' recommendations and must be approved by the JFC." (26:2) "Based on the JFC apportionment decision, the JFACC will be responsible for planning, coordinating, allocating and tasking the assigned sorties." (26:2) Lack of the term "command" tends to indicate that unlike the naval component and the ground component(s) who do command, the JFACC is a coordinator of air assets, with ultimate command of those assets residing with the JFC.

This position arises from the part that the air arm plays in the U.S. Navy. Bottom line -- fleet defense. The carrier battle group must be protected at all costs. After the naval component commander feels that he has provided for self protection, someone may task excess naval air forces for contributions to the campaign plan. The real question with the U.S. Navy lies in the question of "excess" sorties and who determines that. In Desert Storm the fleet in the Red Sea, with the most pessimistic intelligence sources, needed very few air assets for fleet defense. Yet, carrier battle group commanders withheld numerous sorties that could have contributed to the overall air aspect to the campaign plan. On the other hand, no one can deny that the CVG commanders know best what is required for the situation and battle at hand. In an era of significantly reduced defense budgets we probably cannot afford that luxury in the allocation of air power.

The JFACC as a coordinator simplifies the situation among components use of air power, and avoids the issue of efficient use of that air power to meet JFC objectives. As pointed out earlier, the MAGTF uses it's AV-8's and F/A-18's as an airborne artillery

complement to the next day's or current day's battle. Since circumstances may arise that the MAGTF commander may need "air" during the prosecution of his campaign, he withholds a backup from the JFC. The JFC, through the JFACC "coordinator," can task all remaining Marine assets in support of the air campaign or to support the U.S. Army. A similar situation exists in the U.S. Navy. Fleet defense is paramount. Consequently, the naval component commander withholds those sorties he thinks necessary for fleet defense, and allows those "extra" sorties to participate in the air campaign. The post cold war transition from a blue-water navy to a littoral navy starts to complicate this clear division of air power. Evidence generated in the Gulf War tends to support the conclusion that integration of the Naval air component into the JFC's air campaign plan needs reassessment.

JFACC AS A COMMANDER

The U.S. Air Force clearly feels that the JFACC should be a commander. The JFACC Primer reinforces the view that the JFACC as anything but a commander is a detriment to the prosecution of the air campaign in support of JFC objectives. The same document quickly points out that this command extends only to U.S. Air Force sorties and those "excess" sorties from other components. To quote—

Automatically withheld from the JFACC 'pot' (without JFC guidance to the contrary are the following: Marine air in direct support of MAGTF ground forces, Naval air in direct support of maritime operations, Army air within the FSCL (with the possible exception of ATACMs), all SOF air forces, TLAM missions short of the FSCL. (10:24)

The JFACC Primer then states the "If, on the other hand, the JFACC's initial 'pot' of air assets is insufficient to achieve campaign objectives, the JFACC may find himself in conflict with component air commanders and the JFC may be required to make some

hard choices about the apportionment of total theater air assets." It further states that "the fact that components may hold back large portions of the potential air effort could restrict campaign options and strategic possibilities." (10:24) Experience in Desert Storm tends to support this fear. (16:114-120) However, the preponderance of air power possessed by coalition forces did not focus on any area that needed post-mortem redress.

Two points of contention between the USAF and U.S. Army arise in the discussion of the JFACC as a commander or coordinator. The first arises in operations beyond the FSCL. With the advent of the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), the problem of giving the U.S. Army corps commander responsibility for controlling all deep fires could include fires outside their area of responsibility (i.e. beyond the FSCL). Beginning with the concept of Air-Land Battle, the corps commander equated with the ground component commander. This service oriented approach precludes a true "joint" land component commander, and brings up a subject beyond this discussion that has yet to be addressed in any doctrine. The subject of a true joint ground component commander will dwarf any controversy regarding JFACC issues.

"Synchronization" is key to all military doctrine, especially the U.S. Army. The USAF has no difficulty giving the ground component commander the purview of fire support within the FSCL. The difficulty arises in the definition of "deep fires" and its conflict with interdiction with air power. Consider an F-16 pilot tasked to bomb a bridge. The JFACC did not know that the U.S. Army commander or the MAGTF commander had decided to target that same bridge with ATACMS at the same time. To the surprise of the F-16 pilot during his bombing run, the threat was coming not only from the ground, but from above (ATACMS). To prevent this, the JFACC Primer states that "all operations beyond the FSCL should be under the purview of the JFACC." (10:25)

The second area of contention between the USAF and USA is control of theater air and missile defense assets. The JFACC Primer states that "centralized control of theater air and missile defense proves unity of effort, optimizes weapons systems and target paring, minimizes possibility of fratricide, and ensures unity of command to prioritize competing demands for limited theater assets." The conclusion states that the JFACC/AADC should synchronize the vertical dimension of the battlefield and the existing theater air control system architecture for missile defense should not be reinvented. The USAF leaves the "who" commands theater missile defense open for question, but definitely wants centralized planning and decentralized execution. (10:25-26)

Another issue arises from basic USAF doctrine. This doctrine states that "the versatility of aerospace power may easily be lost if aerospace forces are subordinated to surface elements of power. (1:6) It further states that "the air commander should assess the possible uses [of aerospace forces] as to their importance to (1) the war, (2) the campaign, and (3) the battle. Air commanders should be alert for the potential diversion of aerospace forces to missions of marginal importance." (1:8) The U.S. Air Force clearly believes that airmen best know the proper uses of air power, and that an airman (regardless of service) should command all available air power in support of the JFC's campaign plan.

JFACC: COORDINATOR OR COMMANDER

The JFACC should command all "available" air assets. This JFC should in most cases give the JFACC command authority to that of the ground and naval component commanders in a task organized joint force. All available joint publications, service publications, and other literature clearly agree that all military efforts (ground, sea or air) require unity. Joint Pub O-2 states that "sound organizations should provide for unity of effort, centralized direction, and decentralized execution. Unity of effort is necessary for effectiveness and efficiency. Centralized direction is essential for controlling and coordinating the efforts of the forces." (13:IV-7) It then contradicts itself by stating the JFCs should allow Service tactical and operational assets and grouping to function generally as they were designed. The question arises regarding what "design?" The apparent intent is to meet the needs of the JFC, while maintaining the tactical and operational integrity of the service organizations. (13:IV-9)

The issue of "command" of the air begins a turf battle among the service components. A senior U.S. Marine officer stated to this author, "how can you expect the JFACC to hand out Article 15's to our aviators?" The U.S. Air Force stance starts with "if it fly's, we should command it." Where can all the services come to some basic agreement? Clearly, the answer lies in an economy of force that trains and employs as a truly joint task-oriented force employing the unique skills each service brings to the battle.

No one can argue that each service component knows best what they can perform in support of the JFC's campaign plan. It is clear that no USAF wing commander wants to command an air component aboard a USN carrier. It is self-evident that a USA corps commander has no desire to command a USAF squadron of F-15s. Each service component trains to unique skills and brings those assets to the battle or contingency.

The JFC must exploit those characteristics and qualities to his best advantage. Equally clear evidence suggests that each service component will salute smartly to the command of the JFC regardless of parochial interests of a particular component. The real question is who will the JFC allow to command the air medium, and how fairly and justly will that commander use all available air assets to support the ground and naval components.

The turf battle begins with "COCOM", combatant command. This authority allows commanders to organize and employ commands and forces, assign tasks, designate objectives and direct military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the assigned mission. (14:II-7) Joint Pub 3-0 further states that COCOM is exercised only by the CINCs. (14:II-8) Operational control (OPCON) may be exercised at any level below the combatant command. OPCON is "normally exercised by functional component commanders over assigned and attached forces and over other forces as established by JFCs." (14:II-9)

TACON (Tactical control) then follows. This control "may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. TACON does not provide organizational authority or authoritative direction for administrative and logistic support; the parent unit continues to exercise those responsibilities unless otherwise specified in the establishing directive." (14:II-9) Herein lies the debate. All available literature suggests that no component (including the U.S. Air Force) wants OPCON of all air power. That same literature (as reflected in the JFACC Primer) suggests that the U.S. Air Force wants TACON of all available air power. The real question is how realistic is this desire?

The U.S. Marine Corps trains and equips as a light expeditionary force (MAGTF), and integral aviation plays an key role in that force. The Marine Corps fears the possibility that the JFACC (if not a Marine) may place the lives of their force at risk by pursuing an air campaign that ignores their requirements. Marine and Navy aviation train the way they will fight, as an integrated, unified team. According to their premise, any subtraction from that integrated effort will undermine their efficiency and ultimately contribute to their possible failure. This mind set ignores the reality of truly joint warfare (of which the U.S. Marine Corps is a pioneer and a distinguished example), and ignores the realities of the current declining U.S. defense budget.

The U.S. Air Force on the other hand feels that anything that flies should be TACON to them. Official doctrine and publications assume a politically correct position that recognizes the independence of component air arms. Yet, advocates of the "Air Campaign" require the use of ALL available air power. Since the USAF is downsizing to 20 fighter wing equivalents (13 active and 7 reserve), execution of a textbook air campaign may require the use of ALL available air power which includes the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. Clearly there is a dilemma!

The answer lies in truly joint planning and joint training, not as an afterthought but as a way U.S. armed forces accomplish their daily mission. Each service must recognize that they bring a unique capability to the battle space. They must also bring an interservice trust that allows national objective to overshadow inter-service rivalries. Each service must remember the lessons of Guadalcanal. Unity of effort requires unity of command and understanding of component requirements. It also requires a mutual understanding and trust among components that can only be attained with regular joint training and exercises. The U.S. Navy will agree that they should command the naval component. They may disagree about who should command the aviation assets excess to fleet

defense. The U.S. Army will agree that they should command the ground component, even if U.S. Marines are participating. We have avoided this argument in the past by geographically separating ground force actions (like DESERT STORM). The Marines agree that they should command their AOA, and any units that fall under their area of responsibility (including U.S. Army tank units attached to USMC units as happened in DESERT STORM)

The real question is who commands the air medium? The answer requires mutual understanding, trust and training. The advent of USA Command may provide the framework to establish this answer. Within that structure USACOM trainers need to establish joint doctrine and training programs that allow Marines to be Marines within the joint force. They need to insure that exercises like Tandem Thrust, which benefit not only the battle staff, but also contribute to quality training to the aircrew or tank driver, become the norm, not the exceptional once-per-year exercise. Red Flag should always be truly joint and always exercise a JFACC that integrates all service components. Doctrine should incorporate what the Marines already know and understand as their MAGTF-- a task oriented structure. Within that structure each component knows and understands their role to attain mission accomplishment and trusts that the other component will not abandon them.

Mutual understanding, trust and training will only come about when inter-service rivalries and turf-battles take a back seat to what the people of the United States demand of their military establishment. They demand that we efficiently use resources, both people and dollars, to defend their interests whenever they see fit. We in the military have to make common sense decisions. Attempting to conduct an ambitious campaign with limited resources demands realistic choices. The Joint Force Commander must make decisions that make efficient use of his scarce resources to accomplish his/her mission.

If that means that a U.S. Marine general commands all USAF assets as a JFACC, then he should be a COMMANDER, not a coordinator. If, as in DESERT STORM, an air campaign makes sense (and it did), the JFACC should command ALL air capable forces regardless of any services perceived needs and desires, and without regard for the color of his uniform. The common sense answer, the JFACC should not only coordinate, but always COMMAND. But the JFACC must also have the other components trust and confidence which can only come through regular joint training that must become the standard, not the exception. Admiral Paul Miller, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command, stated this succinctly..

Rather than being identified with any specific service, joint forces will function under a unified command structure, combining the needed capabilities from each of the armed services to fit the task at hand. We have what we have, and the challenge is to organize, train and employ our military's matchless capabilities, regardless of service affiliation in meeting our future needs. (20:10)

If this is the new reality, then the components must always train the way they plan to fight--JOINT.

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